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THE STUDIES OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

MR. EDITOR,—I am inclined to think that no part of instruction is so important, so difficult, and so little noticed in works on Education, as that which relates to the little ones in our primary schools. This, no doubt, arises from the fact that most who have written treatises on education, have had little or nothing to do with the class of children to which I refer, and, of course, they have passed over this part of the subject, without seeming to be aware of its great importance, and of the great demand for instruction in this elementary department of education.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the character of the future progress depends greatly upon the first lessons received, and what these shall be, and how they shall be given, are questions that may well give uneasiness to the conscientious teacher. Will you have patience with me while I try to point out some of the considerations, that should govern us in the education of little children.

First, and most important, is the proper development of the physical frame of the child. I do not mean by this, that the child must be required to study any treatise on Physiology, however simplified; but I do mean, that the teacher should be acquainted with the human frame, and should be able to direct the physical exercises of the child, so as best to develop every part of it. She can see to the ventilation of the room, so that the lungs shall have a full supply of pure air, that the blood which feeds the system, flesh, bones and all, may be purified, and fitted to perform its important functions. She can see that the position of the child, when seated, is not constrained and continued so long as to produce uneasiness and pain. She can see that every limb is duly exercised, and she should provide a great variety of simple exercises, which should be regularly performed. These may be given under her eye in recess, but I trust the time is not far distant when they will form an important part of the ordinary course of school exercises.

Various motions of the hands and feet and head may be made in place, but the child should be taught, from the first, how to stand, and walk, and run, and jump; and half the defects which are contracted in infancy, and fixed at the primary school, may be effectually cured, if properly attended to. Crooked legs, hunched backs, curved spines, narrow chests, may usually be remedied by exercises, which, so far from interrupting a school, would give life and animation to it, and make the pupils more capable of performing the other tasks required of them. How many thousands of our females, for example, have grown up with their toes turned in, like Indians or idiots, when a word from the teacher might have corrected the deformity. I suppose that now, if a child were punished for turning in her toes, or doing any such awkward thing, the parents would complain, and the committee dismiss the teacher; and yet the correction of such a habit may be a thousand times more important than the learning of a grammar lesson, for the neglect of which the child might be punished within an inch of its life, and the parents make no objection. We hear a great deal about the importance of bending the twig to secure a proper direction for the tree, but how few teachers ever apply this maxim to the *physical* education of children, to which it is peculiarly applicable. If half as much attention were bestowed upon children as is bestowed upon plants, or even upon the lower animals, how soon should we see our race essentially improved in body and in mind; for the latter generally owes its proportions and power to the condition of the former. The teacher, therefore, must contrive to give such exercises to the child as will properly develop its physical frame, and this will relieve the child from the tedium of idleness and from the suffering of inaction, which constitute so large a portion of what is falsely called its school education.

So much, for the general development of the frame; but this early period is peculiarly the season for training the *senses*. These, it is well known, are imperfect in childhood, but it has rarely happened that they have been instructed, except so far as they have been used in reading and spelling. Until very lately, the youngest pupils have not been allowed to write or to draw, and even now these exercises are rarely taught in our primary schools. But, besides the formation of letters, and the delineation of familiar objects for the purpose of training the eye and hand, there should also be a course of exercises to train the ear, the touch, the smell and the taste.

The introduction of music into our schools, and greater attention to distinct articulation, will do much to train the ear, but the ingenious teacher may invent a great many other exercises, so that the educated ear may be as much superior to ordinary ears as the touch of the blind is superior to that of those endowed with all the senses. The smell and the taste

do not seem to require or admit of much useful instruction, and yet no exercise is more interesting to children, than the attempt to distinguish and to describe the odors and flavors of flowers, fruits, and other objects.

If, as some philosophers have said, all, or even a great part of our ideas are derived through the senses, what can be more important to the correctness of these ideas, than that the senses should be well trained and made as perfect as possible. It is with these as with the faculties of the mind; if allowed to have their own way, they run wild; and yet, how few who watch the mental faculties and provide for their improvement, ever think of doing as much for the senses, on whose reports the faculties essentially depend. It is to be regretted that a series of simple exercises, suited to train the senses, and to develop the whole frame, have not been prepared for our infant and primary schools, and the writer of these remarks would long ago have tried to supply this deficiency, had he not already expended too much time and money in almost fruitless endeavors to correct what he considers other defects in the prevalent system of education, for which the public are not yet entirely prepared.

Another point, more important than those already mentioned, and well calculated to furnish abundant employment for the young pupil, is the cultivation of his heart and his conscience. It is to be hoped that there are very few teachers who do not incidentally call the attention of children to the fact that they have affections and moral sentiments; but I believe I may safely say that few teachers make this a regular part of school instruction, although they see and know that every day adds strength, for good or evil, to these faculties on which the character depends,—the *character*, which is as much more important than the bodily frame and the senses, as the eternal state is more important than the few hours or years that we call time.

No child found in our schools is too young to need instruction in manners and morals, and habits that proceed from them, and yet what teacher has prepared a course of exercises for the heart or the conscience of little children? We have Moral Class Books for the higher classes in our schools, but we suffer the wheat and the tares to grow up together, as if the work of the Evil One might not be prevented by early culture. This education of the heart opens a wide field to the teacher, and if he allows it to include manners, behavior, treatment of animals, companions, parents, &c., he can never lack subjects interesting and of the highest importance, not only to the child, but to all whom his conduct may affect at school, at home, or in the world. I may resume the subject in a future number, but my object now is to break ground in general terms, rather than to descend to particulars. W. B. F.

THE PRIMITIVE SCHOOLS.

The following pleasing notice of the schools of Cambridge, we are told, was written by George Livermore, Esq., one of the School Committee of Cambridge. In giving a history of the schools of his native town, he has given such a tribute to the self sacrificing and far-seeing founders of our Commonwealth, that we feel authorized to transfer the notice, almost entire, to our columns, although a large portion of our last number was devoted to the schools of the same enterprising city.

[From the Cambridge Chronicle.]

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CAMBRIDGE.

RETROSPECTIVE.

"Ask now of the days that are past."

Within a few days, three new schoolhouses, of the most approved model and construction, have been opened for the objects of public instruction in Cambridge. These buildings may be justly regarded as among the chief ornaments of our city, containing as they do, every convenience requisite for the accommodation of the various grades of schools (from the alphabet to the high school) which are to occupy them. They will stand as monuments of the liberality and good taste, as well as of the good sense and true economy of our City Council; and may justly be regarded by all our citizens with proud satisfaction. While every real want of the schools has been attended to, in their erection, no unnecessary expense has been incurred for mere ornament or vain show. Much was said,—and very truly,—at the dedication of the schoolhouses, about the superior advantages now afforded for the education of the young over those possessed by all preceding generations.—Much, too, was said, or intimated, about our superior *liberality* in providing these improved means for every thing necessary in carrying forward the good work. But I fear that in our congratulations on the present favorable aspect of educational affairs, and our high hopes and anticipations for the future, we neglect to do full justice to the struggles and sacrifices of our ancestors in laying the foundation of free schools. But let us not be guilty of sounding our own praises for liberality at the expense of our honored ancestors. They, in their days of weakness, laid the foundation, in toil and trial, in want and danger. We, in peace and plenty, from our abundance, carry up the edifice a little way, or, perhaps add the cap-stone, and then foolishly forget their struggles, or only mention them, to compare their immediate results with ours, and boastingly take to ourselves the glory of success! Such thoughts passed through my mind as a vision of the departed worthies of our ancient town,—Dudley, Shepard, good master Corlet, and a host of others, rose before me during the exercises at the dedication of the High School on Tuesday last.

As was truly remarked by the Rev. Mr. Stearns in his admirable address on that occasion, "It is a matter of pleasing historical reminiscence, that the first dollar ever raised by taxation for public instruction in the new world was expended in Cambridge." I was sorry that he did not give full force to the fact, by stating, as he could have done without any fear of contradiction, that this was the first instance known in the whole world, of a people voluntarily taxing themselves for purposes of education.* At that time (1636) Cambridge, or the New Town, as it was then called, was fortified and enclosed with wooden pickets or pales, to protect the people from the hostile savages. The colonists had hardly secured for themselves a place where they could in safety and comfort lay their heads.† Yet there was no complaint of heavy taxes, (though the comparative rate was far greater than at the present time,) nor any intimation that too much money was demanded for the purposes of education. They did not grudgingly pay the smallest sum by which they could satisfy the demands of the law, but, on the contrary, voluntarily added to the amount required. *Money* was a scarce article in the new world in those days, and it awakens the most pleasing emotions to read the record of the gifts which were made.

True, the donations were small, for the people were poor; yet from their penury they cheerfully gave to the utmost extent of their ability. One contributed a number of sheep; another, cotton cloth, worth nine shillings; a third, a pewter flagon worth ten shillings; others, a fruit dish, a sugar spoon, a great salt, &c. In the words of ex-President Quincy; "The inhabitants of the country contributed from their acres, or their flocks; those of the metropolis from their shops and stores; the clergyman from his library, and the mechanic from his tools of trade! No rank, no order of men, is unrepresented in this great crusade against ignorance and infidelity. None fails to appear at this glorious clan-gathering in favor of learning and religion."

When "Master Eaton's flogging school," became "Harvard College," the interests of common school education were by no means neglected; but in the words of the present distinguished and honored President of that institution, as expressed

* "I believe it is strictly within the bounds of truth to say, that the General Court of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, which met on the eighth of September, 1636, is the first body in which the people by their representatives, ever gave their own money to found a place of education. Certainly the ancient world furnishes no precedent in all its monarchies or republics."—*Everett's Speech at the Centennial Celebration of Harvard College, Sept. 1836.*

† "Samuel Green (one of the first settlers of Cambridge) often mentioned to his children, that for some time after his arrival in New England, he, with several others, was obliged to lodge in large empty casks, having no other shelter from the weather; so few were the huts then erected by our hardy and venerable ancestors." *Thomas's History of Printing, Vol. i. page 250.*

in his excellent address at the recent dedication of our High School, "The spirit, which founded and fostered Harvard College, is the spirit which has founded and upheld, and will continue to support and cherish the schools of New England."

It may be interesting at this time to look at some of the early laws of the colonists relating to the schools.

1642.

"According to an order of the last General Court, 'for the townsmen to see to the educating of children,' the town was divided into six parts, and a person appointed for each division 'to take care of all the families' it contained."—*Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. VII. page 20.*

1645.

"By agreement of the commissioners and on the motions of the elders in their several churches, every family in each colony gave one peck of corn or twelve pence to the college at Cambridge."—*Savage's Winthrop, Vol. II., p. 216.*

1647.

"It being one chief project of Satan to keep men from the knowledge of scripture, as in former times keeping them in unknown tongues, so that at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded and corrupted with false glosses of deceivers; to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors:—

"It is therefore ordered by this court and authority thereof; that every township within this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towns to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid him either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, by way of supply, as the major part of those that order the prudentials of the town shall appoint; provided that those who send their children be not oppressed by paying much more than they can have them taught for in other towns.

"And it is further ordered, that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university; and if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year, then every such town shall pay five pounds per annum to the next such school, till they shall perform this order."—*Colony Laws, Chapter 88.*

To the honor of Cambridge, be it ever remembered, that her citizens did not wait till compelled by law to establish the necessary schools for the education of the young. All the early writers on New England history, speak in the highest praise of the superior advantages furnished in this place.

The existence of a grammar school seems to have been nearly coeval with the town and to have been an object of great care and attention. It was thus noticed by one of the early historians.

1643.

"By the side of the College is a faire Grammer School, for the training up of schollars, and fitting of them for Academical learning, that still, as they are judged ripe, they may be received into the College. Master Corlet is the Mr. who hath well approved himself for his abilities, dexterity and painfulness in teaching and education of the youths under him."

GOOD MASTER CORLET!—*the first Grammar Master of Cambridge*, whose praises were said or sung in prose and rhyme by the most learned men in our country, a century and a half ago, how few of the present generation have ever heard thy name! His remains repose in the old burying ground without epitaph or monument. He was, forty or fifty years, a faithful teacher in our town, and died in 1687, aged 76 years. Mr. Walter of Roxbury published an elegy, in blank verse, on his death. Cotton Mather says: "Elijah Corlet, that memorable old School Master in Cambridge, from whose education our College and country has received so many of its worthy men, that he is himself worthy to have his name celebrated in a paragraph of our Church History,"—and again,

"'Tis Corlet's pains, and Cheever's, we must own,
That, thou, New England, art not Scythia grown."

—
"He lived, and to vast age no illness knew,
Till Time's scythe, for him waiting, rusty grew.
He lived and wrought; his labors were immense,
But ne'er declined to preterperfect tense."

I have said above, that master Corlet has no monument or epitaph. There is a grave stone in the old burying-ground bearing an inscription to a good school dame, which is worth copying. It reads as follows:—

"Here lies ye body of Mrs. Joanna Winship, aged 62 years, who departed this life, November, ye 19th, 1707."

"This good school dame
No longer school must keep,
Which gives us cause
For children's sake to weep."

Many anecdotes,—amusing and instructive relating to the ancient history of Schools and Teachers in Cambridge, might be given, if it were not for occupying to great a portion of the Chronicle on a single subject. The writer might relate some personal reminiscences of the condition and government of the schools in Cambridge, between 30 and 40 years ago; but it is presumed that the early and permanent residents of Cambridge are already familiar with the subject, while to others it would be of comparatively little interest.

G. L.

IMPORTANCE OF GENERAL EDUCATION.

[We feel it to be our duty to place on our record the following remarks of the Hon. Josiah Quincy, Senior, who for six years was Mayor of Boston, and for many years, President of Harvard University. The opinions of such a man in regard to the importance of general education; the duty of our government to insist upon it, to provide means for it, and to enforce the use of the means provided;—and further, the testimony of such a man to the improvement which has actually taken place within a few years in the metropolis and in the Commonwealth, must tend to encourage those who have the superintendence and care of our public system of education to persevere unto the end.]

[From the Boston Mercantile Journal]

EX-MAYOR QUINCY'S REMARKS AT THE QUINCY SCHOOLHOUSE.

The following is a correct report of the remarks of the Hon. Josiah Quincy, Sen., at the dedication of the new school house in Tyler st., on Monday, June 26.

“Having been specially and formally requested by the Chairman of the School Committee to address the audience on this occasion, with the notice that my name had been affixed to the school, I deemed it my duty not to decline their request.

And in the first place, permit me here publicly to express my deep sense of the honor conferred by the Committee in giving my name to this noble building, in which there seems to be concentrated all that is useful and desirable of attainment in a structure erected for the important object for which it is destined. Although this distinction was neither sought, nor even known to me, until communicated by the Chairman of the School Committee, it would be disingenuous and unjust in me not to acknowledge the gratification it has conferred. Having presided nearly six years in the City Government, in the early stages of its existence, and over movements of its Councils, most critical and conclusive of its destinies, it cannot fail to give me pleasure, to be thus assured, that, after the lapse of more than twenty years, the labors of that period are remembered and appreciated by my fellow citizens.

It may, perhaps, be expected on this occasion, that I should say something on the subject of our public schools, and of the duties and prospects of the country in respect to them. But the subject includes topics too vast and important to be embraced in the limited time it is proper for me to occupy; and is already in the hands of an official agent and of a committee competent and fully qualified to do justice to it. I shall limit myself to some general views and to a single topic, on which it may be useful and timely to speak.

Concerning the importance of education, including in that term intellectual, moral and religious instruction, it is impossible in political associations like those of the United States, for any expression to be too strong, or any expenditure, if wisely applied, too great. It is not too much to say, that, in education the vital principle of a republic exists. For, a society, without prevalent knowledge, morals and religion, combines in itself the elements of anarchy, revolution and despotism. And in proportion as education in these respects is deficient, the tendency of such society to one or another of those states is perpetual, and sooner or later one or the other must be predominant. It follows as a consequence, that it is the great duty of a Republic not only to provide that every child in it may be educated, but also to take care, as far as possible, that every child in it shall be educated. In this point of view, it is unquestionable that the duties and rights of society are paramount to the duties and rights of the parents. If, therefore, in a community calling itself a Republic, children, at an age at which they may and ought to be at school, are found idle and vagrant in our streets, loitering about public places and wharves, giving evident marks, by both language and conduct, of general, if not total ignorance, the society in which such courses are permitted, though a Republic in name, is, in fact, neglectful of its most imperious duty ; and the time cannot be distant when its reality, with its name will be obliterated.

How that degree of universal education which is essential to the duration of a republic, is to be attained, may well occupy the most earnest thought of our citizens and legislators. In the present condition of the United States, a delay in devising the best means, or a failure in their application, will be conclusive as to the fate of our republic ; for society in America, in this day, has to struggle not only with the natural apathy and antipathy of the young to restraint, but with an infusion of adult ignorance, which seeks only bread ; craving the supply of present wants, with no knowledge of the past, and no care concerning the future. If this state of things be not met, in the only way in which it can be effectually, by adequate provisions for the instruction of the whole rising and coming generation, and with the application of means and energies adapted to the crisis, it needs no spirit of prophecy to foretell that many years will not elapse before our republican institutions will be overrun and laid prostrate, with as steady and complete subversion, as that of the Goths and Vandals who laid prostrate the institutions of ancient civilization.

It is not the time, nor the place to speak of those means and appliances, but they must be formed and efficiently used by the united action of the inhabitants of this country, independent of political parties or projects, or it will soon be too late. It is in the nature of things impossible that the healthy

influence of our institutions, and the elements of the prosperity, which experience shows they include, should long continue, if the current of vice, the ignorance and recklessness, which the old world is daily pouring in upon us, and which, there is reason to believe, instead of decreasing will be enlarged, unless the present possessors of the country have the sense and spirit to meet the sacrifices and exertions the exigency requires, and above all, if they do not take care that the vice, the ignorance and indifference to education, which characterize so large a portion of our emigrant population, shall not be transmitted and perpetuated in their children.

The improvements in the science and means of education during the last twenty years have, in this city and Commonwealth, been exemplary and unrivalled, and furnish the hope that our people will meet with spirit the consequences to us of the unprecedented condition of the European world ; and that our statesmen and patriots, by their wisdom and fidelity in the cause of general education, will make permanent the prosperity we now enjoy, and secure the perpetuity of our republican institutions.

HEALTH OF TEACHERS.

Our attention has of late been frequently drawn to the increasing physical debility of teachers, especially in our cities and populous towns. We have inquired of several invalids, and find that they attribute the failure of their health to the severity of their labor. They uniformly agree that six hours a day are too much for any constitution, and they determine to leave the profession of teaching, as soon as they can find any thing else to do.

Now, we believe there can be no doubt in regard to the amount of ill-health that prevails among teachers, but we do think the cause of it is often misunderstood. Six hours of mental labor, varied as it must be by the variety of studies to be taught, cannot be a severe duty for a person in full health ; and before we reduce the amount of labor to the invalid standard, it may be well to try to raise the standard of health, and increase the physical ability.

The fact seems to be, that teachers take too little exercise, and generally pay too little regard to those circumstances on which health depends. As far as our observation goes, not one teacher in twenty is familiar with the laws of health, the structure, functions, and wants of his body, and, of course, he neglects the care of his person ; he looks to rest and not to exercise for relief when his mind is weary ; and he breathes impure air, as if he supposed it might pass through his lungs with the same impunity that it would pass through a metallic tube.

When we have made this remark to a suffering teacher, we

have been told that "he would gladly ventilate his school-room if there were any way to do this, but the room is so badly constructed that he cannot do it." On inquiry, we have found that this want of ventilation arose not so much from the impossibility of producing ventilation, as from the ignorance of the teacher on the subject, and his want of determination to have pure air and enough of it. Every school house that we have seen has had a ceiling, and surely a hole can be made in this. This, however, will do little good unless the loft or passage, into which the hole opens, be ventilated, and this can always be done, and often without injury to the appearance of the building. If mortar be needed and cannot be found, a good substitute can be made, in a few minutes, of whiting, or plaster of Paris, wet and mixed with about one third its bulk of flour. If the schoolhouse have no cellar under it, a hole can be made in the floor directly under the stove, and this without expense; and if the stove can be surrounded by a piece of sheet iron, touching the floor, but open, of course, at the top, the air admitted through the floor, will be warmed against this and the stove, before it is spread over the room. If there be a cellar, the door of it should be left open, or a tube brought from out of doors to the hole in the floor. The confined air of a cellar is not fit to be used for ventilation.

Then there are windows in every schoolroom that we have seen, and, if they do not let down, the teacher, if he has one spark of ingenuity, can remove one or more of the upper panes of glass, and fit into its place a piece of wood or pasteboard, with a hinge and a catch of wire. Many who can let down their windows, are not careful to do so; but, let the teachers always remember, that there is not half so much to fear from a somewhat cold room, as from impure air, however well warmed; and let him remember too, that the thermometer does not indicate the degree of impurity, as it does the degree of temperature; indeed the temperature, which is sometimes carefully attended to, is quite unimportant compared with the quality of the air in the room. There are many simple kinds of apparatus for warming and at the same time ventilating rooms, but as "they all cost money," we only suggest such simple things as may be done without expense.

The first symptom of ill health usually felt by teachers is head ache or dizziness. The brain is exercised more actively than the limbs, and of course the blood resorts to the brain, as it does to any organ that is exercised, to repair the waste, and restore the lost energy. But the blood has not been properly purified in the lungs by contact with pure air, and the functions of the brain are, of course, disturbed, and disease is the inevitable consequence. A torpidity of the system is generally the next symptom, and, the more exercise is needed, the less disposition there is to take it. The teacher then seeks a

boarding house so near the school that he may not be obliged to walk ; his dignity prevents him from playing with his pupils ; and who can wonder that the average term of a teacher's active service throughout New England, does not exceed two whole years !

Now, exercise is as essential to the health of teachers as pure air, and thanks to the beneficence of the all wise Creator, the cheapest exercise is, for them, the best. When the head has become dizzy, or numb, or inclined to ache, it is common for teachers to resort to some exercise which tries the arms, and increases the activity of the chest and upper part of the body ; and, not unfrequently failing of relief, he concludes that it is not exercise that he needs, and he gives it up. Now, the fact is, there is already too much activity near the head, and the policy is to increase that at the remoter parts, so that the blood which is inclined to rush to the brain, may be drawn away into other channels, and the head relieved. No exercise will do this so easily, and so effectually as *walking*, and this is emphatically *The Teacher's Exercise*. But one long walk, or two, will not suffice ; the exercise should be regular and continued, and performed with a view to its object. Careless and indolent walking is far better than none, but when disease has commenced, or is threatened, a little regard to the manner of walking will make it much more effectual as a remedy. The object, be it remembered, is, to increase the circulation in the lower extremities, and, to do this with certainty, a little more than the ordinary circulation is requisite, and, to procure this, it is necessary to quicken the step in a trifling degree, and to walk a little farther than is perfectly agreeable. If, while walking, the body be kept as erect as is consistent with ease, the advantage will be increased, and more muscles will be called into action.

If the weather be such that walking abroad is prevented, the exercise may be taken in any sheltered place ; and, to make a little go a great way, we would recommend walking forward and then backward, instead of turning round. Walking and gentle running occasionally on the toes, that is, without touching the heel, also increases the effect, especially if the knees be kept stiff. But, in whatever way the walking be done, care should always be taken to keep the shoulders back, and never to suffer them to collapse forward. Most of this necessary exercise can be obtained by overseeing and directing the exercises of the pupils in recess, and we maintain that it is as much the duty of the teacher to do this as to teach any lesson from the books. Many children, especially those who need exercise the most, do not take any in recess if left to themselves ; and much that is taken by the rest is not of the most useful kind. The teacher should provide such a course of exercises as will develope the whole physical frame, and if he or she

leads in it, there are few children who will not gladly join in the sport. It is by such practical lessons that physiology is best taught in schools, and it will not be necessary for the child to commit to memory any work on physiology, if the teacher understands it, and will give such regular exercises as we have proposed.

W. B. F.

[For the Common School Journal.]

SUPERINTENDENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

That the public schools of Massachusetts have improved to a high degree, within the last ten or twelve years, is too obvious to every one who has enjoyed the means of instituting a comparison, to need the assertion at this time. Witness the houses in which they are now kept, the books used, the apparatus,—in quantity as well as quality,—the committees, and though *last*, by no means *least*, the teachers. Still, there is much, very much more to be done to satisfy the reasonable wants and expectations of the community. The most urgent desideratum at present, or, at least, that which lies most obviously within the practicability of the people, is the office of a superintendent of schools in our cities and large towns.

The advantages of such an officer have been so amply proved, in places where one has been appointed, that it is matter of great surprise, that here, in the "Athens of America,"—where so much is done for common education, this office should not now constitute an important item in our school system.

The School Committee may be good and true men; as well fitted for the duties they have assumed as those of any other department of public service; but they, with few exceptions, are men having business of their own to attend to, which will not admit of their giving so large a portion of time to the schools as their various necessities require. And this must always be the case in cities and towns of large population, where, consequently, there are many schools. But were it even feasible for every member of the committee to give four-fold the time he now devotes to these objects, a want would still remain;—that unity of manner and purpose, which must be the work of a single mind.

A superintendent should be a man of activity, of large and liberal mind, well cultivated by education, by reflection, by familiarity with the influences which control both men and children. He should have some decided views on the general subject of educating a people, but be wedded to no man's *system*. He should feel that he has "not already attained," but be still a searcher after truth, and willing to receive it from any source.

"Who is wise"? "He that learns from all men."

He should be quick to detect, and dexterous in applying the remedies. His manner should be at once dignified and con-

ciliatory. In approaching errors that long indulgence may have rendered dear in the eyes of the perpetrator, he should spare the feelings of the parties concerned, while he indicates the fault to be removed. He should know the diseased state of the common mind at the present time, on the subject of childhood's privileges, and be ready to support the teacher in his down-trodden rights. In a word, he should be a *finished man* ! For no situation in civilized society requires a greater diversity of talents than that of one, on whom devolves the responsibilities of the office in question.

This office is objected to by some, on the ground of its anti-republican character, it being apprehended that too much power would be concentrated in one individual ; and that school committees would become useless. These are groundless objections. There would still be employment enough for all. Not an hour's less time than now, should be given by those having the schools in charge at the present time. The superintendent should be the right arm of the committee, not independent of it,—but doing such portion of *its* work as cannot be performed by the members, and under the general direction of the board. He should visit all the schools frequently ; note the particular excellences or defects of each ; keeping carefully-made and minute statistics of all ; and, instituting comparisons among them, he should endeavor, from what he finds among the best, to introduce improvements into the inferior.

It is not pretended that all could be brought to the standard of the best ; every body, who has reflected on the matter, must know that the quality of the school " must exist in the man,"—in the teacher. Still, the teacher may possess the elements of improvement within him, which need only to be excited, by a representation of what others are doing, (of which, from his isolated situation he is ignorant,) to unfold and produce their legitimate fruits.

It is found that a large majority of our *successful* public teachers, are in favor of the establishment of the office of superintendent, while those, remarkable for their short-comings, are opposed to it. Does not this furnish a powerful argument for the affirmative ? Does not the man of conscious integrity and skill, court investigation ? Is he not desirous of having his plans, his course of instruction, his modes of influence known to all interested. And, on the contrary, is it not he whose methods, and course, and results are unfit to bear the test of careful scrutiny, who wishes to shut out the light, lest it should accelerate his downfall ?

There can be no question, that, were means adopted to obtain minute information as to every particular transaction in some schools, individuals, who now subsist from the public treasury, would soon have permission to retire to private life. A well-qualified superintendent would bring such cases before the

school committee, and the existing evils would be forthwith corrected. Many a man has been long tolerated in office, although notoriously unworthy, because we have had no one whose specific duty it was to denounce the delinquent, and because the task of doing it is so disagreeable in its nature. Thus, hundreds of our children have been defrauded of their dues, from a feeling of compassion or sympathy for the incumbent, and the responsibility has been felt by no one, because it was shared among so many. And so it will always be while this great defect exists in our system, and pity triumphs over justice in our hearts.

These few are among very many reasons, that might be presented, in favor of the establishment of the office of superintendent of common schools; an office of unspeakable importance to our rising race, and, of course, to the whole community.

The schools of our metropolis have been particularly adverted to in these remarks, as furnishing illustrations in point; for the want is felt there to a remarkable degree—but probably every large town or city in the Commonwealth might furnish similar examples.

That Massachusetts stands well in respect to public schools, cannot be denied; in fact the whole country is her debtor for the noble example she presented in the days of her early settlement, and for what she has since done; but, as it often happens that the pupil comes to excel the teacher, so in this matter; and some who may have learned of us, are now leaving us behind in the glorious race. Rhode Island, for instance, the most catholic and tolerant state in our national confederacy, spurning all considerations of sect or party, and uniting in the great and good cause of universal education, has selected,—*at the very highest salaries that are given to any public officers in the state*—two highly accomplished men, as superintendents of her schools; one for the State, and one for the city of Providence. And what is the result?—among other advantageous ones, it may be said, that no public schools in the Union are superior to those of Providence, and no school system is more energetic, no schools more full of promise than those of this little gem of a State! Shall Massachusetts then, permit her neighbor, her child, to outstrip her in the noble race? I trust not. Let the people of Massachusetts see to it, that such a spirit is excited among those who are seeking the greatest good of our beloved Commonwealth, that another session of our Legislature shall not be suffered to pass, without conferring upon us the authority we so much need,—that to establish the office of Superintendent of Common Schools.

G. T.

Men are made for action, usefulness, and happiness. Now as the activity, the usefulness, and the happiness of an individual,—his intellectual power, and his moral excellence, even, are greatly dependent upon the original structure and the actual condition of his bodily organization, so is it with classes and nations of men. This structure and condition are, to a very great extent, capable of being modified by means entirely under our control. Intelligent and virtuous parents strive to give to their children the best possible organization, and to teach them how to keep it in the best condition. So it should be with the virtuous and intelligent classes; they should look upon less favored classes as their children;—strive to improve their condition, and above all to give them that knowledge which will enable them to dispense with all aid. The frightful number of those unfortunates whose members incumber the march of humanity;—the insane, the idiots, the blind, the deaf, the drunkards, the criminals, the paupers, will dwindle away as the light of knowledge makes clear the laws which govern our existence. But, in the mean time, let none of them be lost; let none of them be uncared for; but whenever the signal is given of a man in distress,—no matter how deformed, how loathsome even, he may be; let it be regarded as a call to help a brother.—*Dr. S. G. Howe.*

EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS.

The 18th Annual Session of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION will commence at Bangor, Me. on the 15th of Aug. Eminent lecturers are engaged.

The Annual gathering of the Graduates and Pupils of the BRIDGEWATER STATE NORMAL SCHOOL will take place on the 16th of August, at 9 A. M. The next term of this school commences Aug. 2.

THE TEACHERS' CONVENTION of Norfolk and Plymouth Counties will meet at Dedham, August 17 and 18. Lectures, Discussions and other interesting exercises may, as usual, be expected.

There is to be a STATE EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION at Chelsea, in Vermont, Aug. 22. The meeting is called by the County Superintendent and many other distinguished gentlemen.

The Annual gathering of the WESTFIELD NORMAL ASSOCIATION is to take place on the 6th of Sept. Mr. Mann is to address them.

The next term of the W. NEWTON STATE NORMAL SCHOOL commences Sept. 6.

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